

3 1761 12062292 3

CAI
UA
-1976
H17

Harbourfront

— an unparalleled opportunity
to shape concepts of urban living





“Toronto Harbourfront International will be an urban meeting place with a waterfront flavour, providing opportunity to display, enrich and share the diverse cultural traditions of the people of Toronto. It will generate authentic interaction between cultural, leisure and commercial facets of the urban community and will reflect the individual identities and creative energies from which Canada draws its strength and character.”

— Harbourfront Council, appointed by the Minister of State for Urban Affairs in conjunction with the Chairman of the Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto and the Mayor of the City of Toronto, to recommend development of more than 86 acres of land on Toronto's waterfront, largely owned by the Government of Canada.

History — and the opportunity

The development of container shipping in the 1960's had a detrimental effect on waterfront communities around the world, including Toronto. The old facilities were not capable of handling the big container ships.

In Toronto, new port facilities were built at the eastern end of the harbour, and shipping began to desert the central waterfront.

Two things might happen: either the old port area would degenerate into a wasteland of derelict buildings, or private interests would take over the waterfront and turn it into exclusive residential and hotel developments. The federal government, which had begun buying land along the waterfront in 1972, opted for a different approach: basically to make the waterfront available to the general public for their use and enjoyment, and to regenerate a vital part of the urban community.





In October of 1972, the federal government announced plans to acquire the entire 86-acre section between York Street and the National Yacht Club, just west of Bathurst.

This area, now known as Harbourfront, is bounded on the north by the Gardiner Expressway. On the east is the Harbour Castle development, and on the west the Yacht Club.

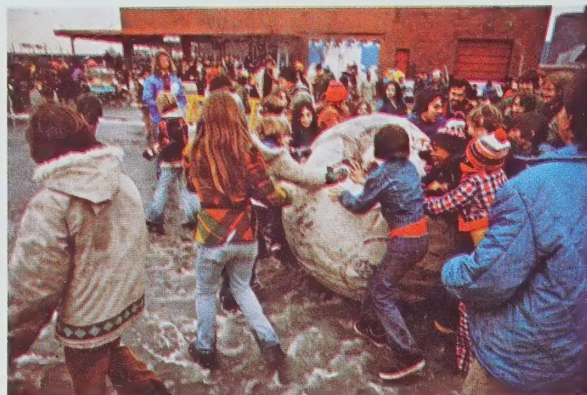
Harbourfront's neighbors include some highly popular attractions — the CN Tower, the world's tallest free-standing structure, Ontario Place, the CNE grounds, and the Toronto islands.

Harbourfront is at the hub of a lakeshore "people area", on the doorstep of a large and dynamic centre of commerce and industry, and in the midst of a vibrant multicultural community. The job ahead was to do justice to its potential.

First, as a joint project, the Ministry of State for Urban Affairs and the Department of Public Works removed tons of trash and took down fences and other barriers. Temporary landscaping and amenities allowed visitors to use at least some of the site freely, but more specific attractions had to be provided. The Direct Winter's building was renovated and heated for public use, and in 1974 various activities were undertaken to draw people to the site.

The Bohemian Embassy, one of Toronto's earliest coffee houses, was revived at Harbourfront, and provided poetry readings, hootenannies, jazz sessions, and amateur nights. Craft demonstrations were organized. Children flocked to the drop-in centres, outdoor concerts were held by the water, and there was dancing under the stars.

The Canadian Railway Historical Association established a museum on the site. There was a winter carnival, the German-Canadian exhibition, the Italian folklore festival, and many other events.





In the creative playground, youngsters under six could play in the sand, build things with blocks, or paint a masterpiece. The adventure playground, for older children, introduced a new concept for playgrounds — that kids can have a lot of fun with old planks and a handful of nails. And in these areas, adults stayed outside.

As a result of these interim measures, more than half a million visitors came to Harbourfront in the two years following its opening. Many were attracted by the activities, but some came just to walk by the water and watch the ships go by.

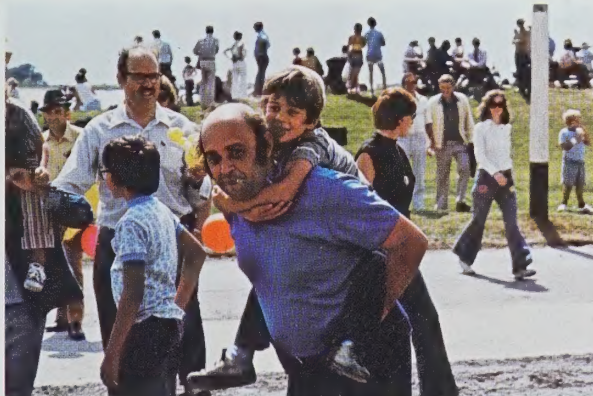
It now was necessary to produce a long-term plan which would provide the greatest benefit for Torontonians and their visitors. Rather than proceed unilaterally, the federal government decided in favour of consultation and public involvement, so that the people themselves, and their representatives, would help determine the development of this valuable piece of real estate.

Many thoughts — and planning

The theme for Harbourfront which appears on page 1 was developed from many sources. Meetings called “probes” were held to involve various groups and organizations connected with or affected by the area, and there were open meetings and tours of the site. Some 3,000 people were involved, and they submitted more than 200 written suggestions.

An intergovernmental committee was set up, including the province, metro and the city, to facilitate consultation and to supervise the initial planning activity. Harbourfront Council, made up of 15 independent citizens, was established in July 1975. It, in turn, established six subcommittees and an executive co-ordinating committee, to cope with the many policy issues involved. Each committee was to base its work on the principles expressed in the theme.





The Harbourfront Council also agreed on seven criteria for what should happen on the site, and how.

1. There should be a year-round program of cultural, recreational, and educational activities.
2. There should be emphasis on excellence, creativity and innovation.
3. Plans should make the most of the area's port tradition and waterfront location.
4. Plans should generate, test, and show new ideas.
5. The physical assets of the site should be used to the best advantage.
6. There should be gradual evolution to meet community needs.
7. There should be free access to the site at all times.

The Council recommended the formation of a Harbourfront Corporation to manage and direct development of the site.

Let's look at the Corporation

It will not be a Crown corporation, but will be organized under Part Two of the Canadian Corporations Act, without share capital, and there will be no pecuniary gain to its members.

The board of directors of the Harbourfront Corporation will have one member nominated by each government level. Other members will be chosen by agreement among the participating governments. Elected representatives and civil servants will not be eligible for membership. Advisory groups made up of informed citizens and representatives of various organizations will ensure public participation.

Operations will be divided into two sections: real estate and programming. The real estate operations will be run on a strictly commercial basis, and the profits will be used for programming operations.





Activities at Harbourfront will be initiated by the community. Assistance from Harbourfront will be in the form of leasehold improvements, renovations, and other services. No cash subsidies are to be paid. New buildings will be erected only if an existing structure cannot be renovated to meet the need.

The site is expected to grow gradually (most of the buildings are under lease and won't be available until the end of 1977). The landscaped public areas, totalling about 75 acres, are to be ready as soon as possible.

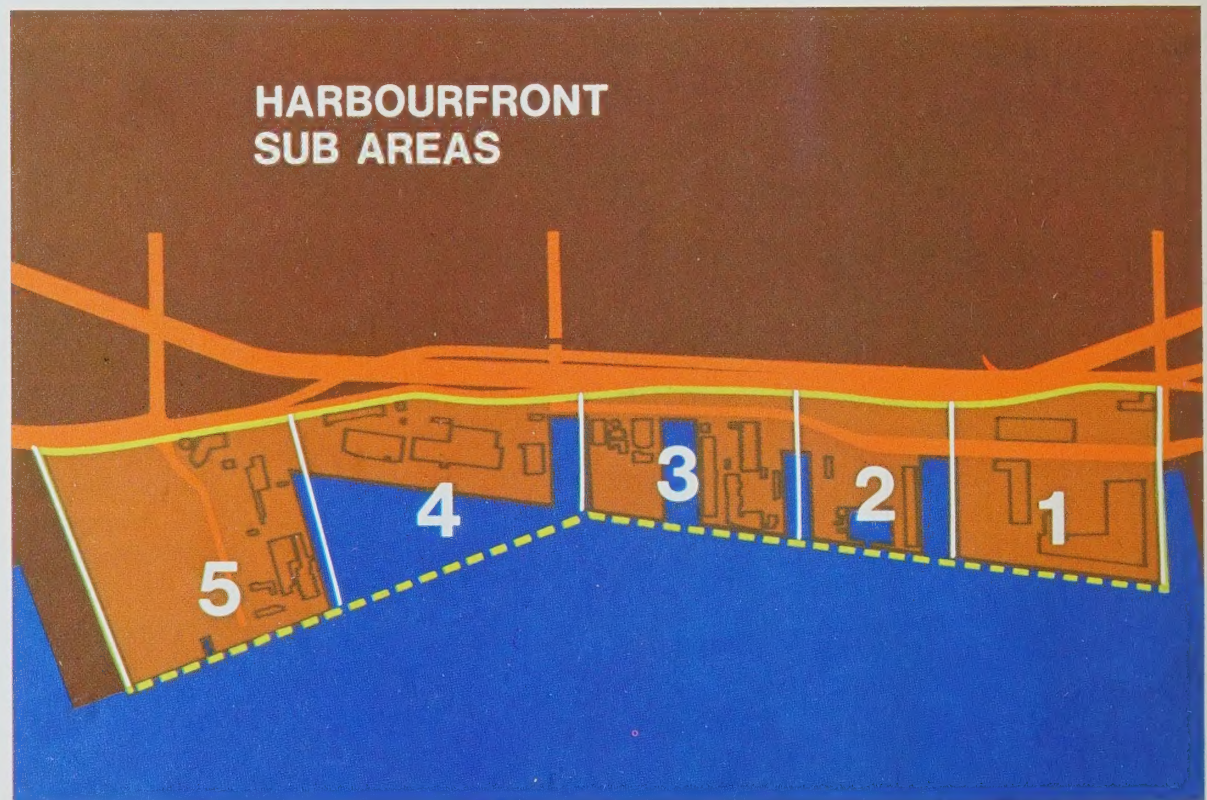
With a balanced level of activities the year around, the site should be drawing about 2.5 million visitors a year by the 1980's.

The Concept Plan

“The entire project would become a showpiece for Toronto and Canada . . . We believe our proposals provide for a truly dynamic project. Harbourfront will set new high standards for the development and management of public facilities and for re-cycling industrial land. The public sector and the private community will co-operate in rejuvenating the most important piece of neglected real estate in Toronto . . .”

... Harbourfront Council

The Harbourfront area has been divided into five sub-areas; described in the following pages and related to the numbers on the diagram.



SUB AREA 1
YORK
QUAY
1981



1. York Quay

This area would reflect its proximity to the expanding downtown core. The foot of York Street would be a major arrival point for cars and public transit. It would provide the first of four major public park areas for high intensity use, featuring shops, cafes, theatres, a cinema, crafts studio, a crafts market and an art gallery.

Also envisaged for this area are a fitness centre, offices, and an urban square — an exciting public place at the waterfront for meeting, sharing, celebrating and mixing with the crowd.

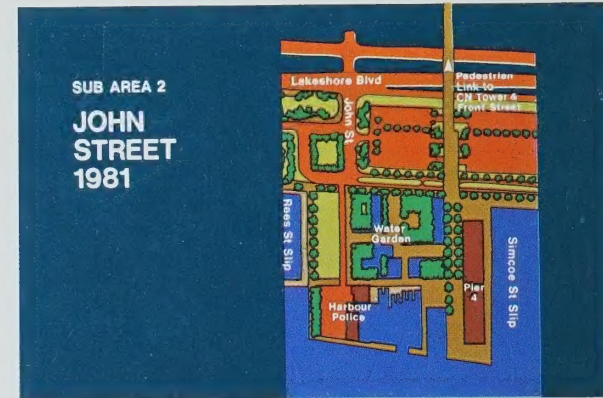
View looking south from the Urban Square entry area.

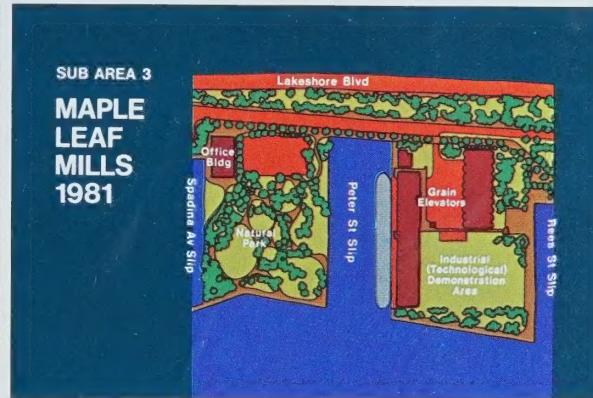
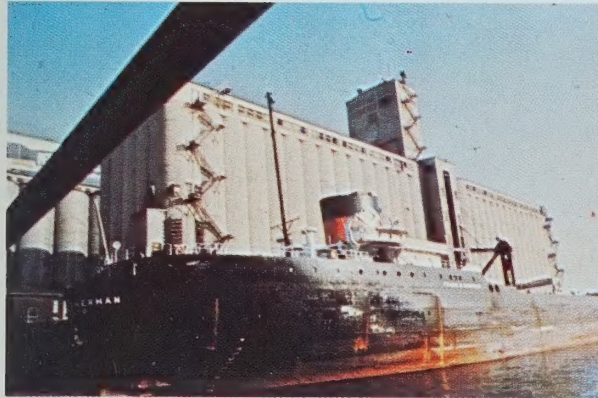
2. The John Street Area

This sub-area would feature attractions for tourists and residents, keyed to its proximity to the CN Tower, which will be reached from the site by a footpath bridging the Gardiner Expressway.

One feature in this area would be a water garden, with landscaped pools and fountains. Activities would include a restaurant, water-safety instruction and self-help boat building. The marine flavour of the area would be maintained by the presence of facilities for the harbour police. The brigantine and "Sail Ontario" operations would be moved to this area, and there would be a sailing school. Arrangements would be made here for boat cruises.

View looking north along the Pier 4 Promenade.





3. Maple Leaf Mills Site

The proposed development of this site would reflect this location's traditional role of waterfront industrial processes and technology. The grain elevators, listed as historically significant, would be retained and would continue to be available for grain storage and associated shipping and trucking functions, offering one of a number of "public windows" on traditional port activity.

The western-most quay would provide the third major public park area within the site — a quiet, year-round natural park environment at the water's edge.

View looking south from Queen's Quay towards Peter Street Slip and Spadina natural park.



4. Spadina Quay

This area would include a proposed public marina to provide berthing facilities for up to 350 boats. There would be a “village” atmosphere to the area. Existing buildings would be refurbished to provide a concert theatre and associated facilities; a cultural centre of learning, entertainment and commercial activities; a “winter garden” — a large greenhouse filled with sun, trees and exotic plants; the Railroad Historical Museum; a day-care facility; and a boat maintenance, outfitting and repair facility associated with the marina.

View looking west from Spadina boardwalk towards the Bathurst recreation park.





5. Bathurst Quay

Another major arrival point for cars and public transit, and the fourth major public park area within the site. This park area would be developed over most of the 15-acre site to provide a number of large open spaces useable for a variety of informal sports and recreation activities year-round.

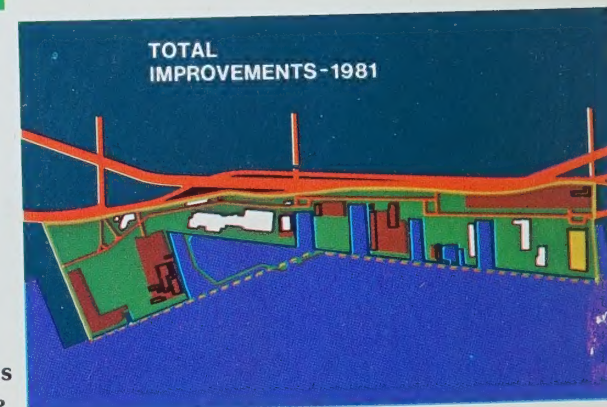
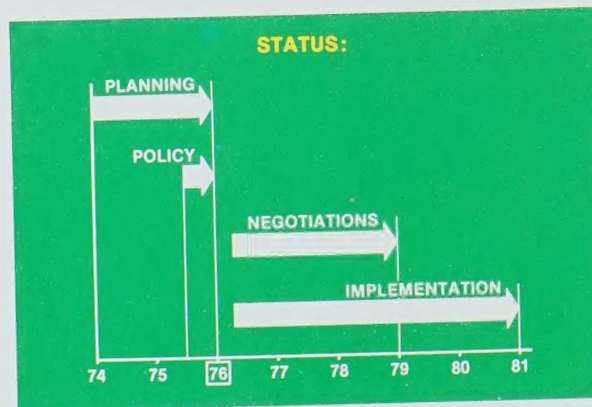
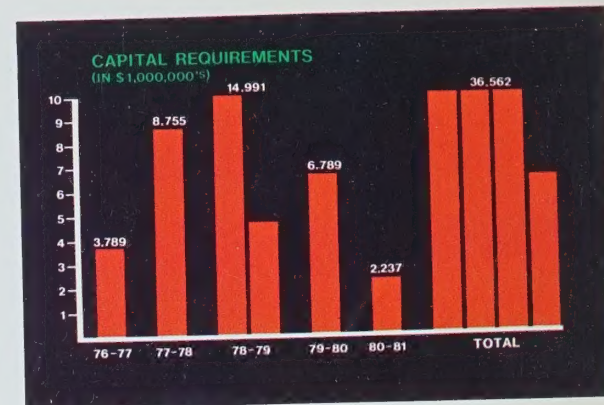
The "Canada Malting" site would be maintained as a working port industry. The northwest corner of the site provides for a potential right-of-way for improved access to the Toronto Island airport as well as a major site for potential commercial/public development at the "bottom of Bathurst".

View along Western Gap shipping channel.

Five Year Phasing

It is proposed that capital expenditure by the federal government be spread over five years, starting in 1976-77. The total forecast (in 1975 dollars) is 36.5 million. This is made up of 18.5 million for basic site improvement; 7.2 million to prevent further deterioration of the Terminal Warehouse; 4.4 million to bring other existing buildings up to minimum standards for public use; 6.4 million to support activities on the site and provide a few major public attractions. No further contributions will be requested for capital development.

Funding for services such as maintenance of roads is to be negotiated among the four government levels involved; other operating expenses are to be met by revenues from the site. Further improvements or developments will be financed by site users themselves or in co-operation with Harbourfront.



Green — public open space
White — rehabilitated buildings
Yellow — Terminal Warehouse



Ministry of State
Urban Affairs Canada

Ministère d'État
Affaires urbaines Canada